

SIX MONTHS IN REVIEW

AN EQUITABLE CRISIS RESPONSE

DEC 2020 // PREPARED BY THE UTAH DIVISION OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS





ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEC 2020 // PREPARED BY THE UTAH DIVISION OF MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS IN COLLABORATION WITH THE MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE STATE OF UTAH COVID-19 RESPONSE.

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PICTURED ABOVE ARE THE ORIGINAL MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE AS APPOINTED BY GOVERNOR GARY R. HERBERT. TRANSITIONS HAVE OCCURED IN THE PAST YEAR & NEW MEMBERS HAVE PARTICIPATED TO ADVANCE EFFORTS.

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- Dr. Len Novilla
- Dale Ownby
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- Yehemy Zavala Orozco

HEALTH EQUITY

- Dulce Diez (Lead)
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- Dr. Len Novilla
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- Rebecca Banner
- Aden Batar
- Heather Borski
- Mike Haddon
- Mikelle Moore
- Dr. Len Novilla
- Sahil Oberoi
- Ming Wang
- Yehemy Zavala Orozco

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HOW TO REFERENCE REPORT:

Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs. (2020). Multicultural Advisory Committee: Six Months in Review of an Equitable Crisis Response. Salt Lake City, Utah.

FOR MORE RESOURCES:

Visit <u>multicultural.utah.gov/covid-19-resources/</u> for a comprehensive database of COVID-19 information and resources for multicultural communities. Visit <u>coronavirus.utah.gov</u> for official state COVID-19 updates.

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On March 6th, 2020, Governor Gary Herbert declared a state of emergency in Utah due to the coronavirus pandemic. In the face of such an unprecedented situation, there would be many social, cultural, and economic dimensions to this crisis. Unique barriers would exist for those from the communities that have historically existed in the margins and continued to be forgotten in the face of this new and unfamiliar crisis.

The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs (MCA) sought to establish a baseline of immediate needs and unique barriers faced by disenfranchised populations during the outbreak to better inform state leaders of the growing gaps and to solve these concerns together. With the support of the Multicultural Commission, which is co-chaired by Lt. Governor Spencer Cox and Byron Russell, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Commission, chaired by Ms. Emma E. Houston and Simba Maponga, the division prepared a survey for service providers and first responders working directly with vulnerable and systematically marginalized communities.

The qualitative data collected highlighted the lived experience of underserved constituents and it allowed the division to understand the complex and intersectional crisis that many people were enduring. The data was coded based on keywords, phrases, and ideas that emerged from each question and these codes allowed us to cluster the data based on commonalities and significant topics. The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs worked quickly to create the "Local Needs Among Multicultural Communities During the COVID-19 Pandemic" Report. One of the primary recommendations made was to create a multicultural subcommittee that focused on the growing disparities in order to centralize and amplify the voices of those most often silenced.

Governor Gary R. Herbert assigned MCA, led by Director Nubia Peña, to oversee the Multicultural Advisory Committee of Utah's COVID-19 Response, co-chaired by Byron Russell and Ze Min Xiao. Governor Herbert formally appointed 24 racially and ethnically diverse leaders that represent a cross-section of state agencies, nonprofits, faith-based organizations and community leaders to serve on this committee. Service providers, including mutual aid groups and community-based organizations, have been actively engaged in addressing disparities from the onset and throughout the course of the pandemic. The objectives of the Multicultural Advisory Committee are to elevate, coordinate, connect, and accelerate. This requires working with existing frameworks to amplify efforts and alleviate the growing disparities faced by marginalized and underrepresented communities. For multifaceted impact, the group has focused on identifying service delivery gaps in food security, housing and social services, economic sustainability, communications, language accessibility, digital equity, and health access.

The Committee's work was not done in isolation, but deeply rooted in collaboration with community organizations that serve historically underrepresented populations. As efforts developed, various community partners attended and contributed to weekly meetings and helped identify culturally responsive outreach strategies.

This six-month overview summarizes the Multicultural Advisory Committee's approach to addressing the disparate impact of COVID-19 on communities that have also suffered from historic disinvestment and structural inequity. We believe that the state can move forward creating model practices, particularly during times of emergencies, that are culturally inclusive and considerate of all people in Utah.

To mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19, we must work together to ensure that people have resources to maintain and manage their physical and mental health. We need programs and practices that fit the communities where racially and ethnically diverse groups live, learn, work, play, and build community.

We thank our state leaders, crisis command, emergency responders, frontline advocates, faith leaders, nonprofits, and service providers for their relentless work in helping Utah during this season. It will take all of us to ensure none of us are forgotten and we look forward to supporting relief efforts across the state that advance initiatives that promote inclusion, equity, and human rights. More than ever before, we need solidarity, hope and the civic will and cooperation to see this crisis through together.

For future reference, the Multicultural Advisory Committee will be interchangeably referred to as "The Committee" throughout the rest of the report.

2020 TIMELINE

MARCH APRIL MAY One of the second se

- March 6 Gov. Gary R. Herbert issues an executive order declaring a state of emergency in response to the evolving outbreak of novel coronavirus.
- March 14 The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs publicly issues a letter from Director Nubia Peña to promote practices and policies that are culturally inclusive and mindful of vulnerable communities in light of the pandemic.
- March 18 A magnitude 5.7
 earthquake strikes Salt Lake County,
 requiring emergency efforts in
 addition to the coronavirus
 pandemic.
- March 24 The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, the Utah Multicultural Commission, and the Utah Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Commission create a survey for frontline service providers currently working with underserved populations to comprehend the social, cultural, and resource impact that the COVID-19 pandemic is having on vulnerable communities.

- April 2 The Utah Multicultural Commission, Utah Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Commissions, and other community partners review the survey results for a timely and efficient reportout.
- April 23 The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs announces the release of the "Local Needs Among Utah's Multicultural Communities During COVID-19" report that established a baseline of unique barriers faced by marginalized communities during the outbreak. The qualitative data identified ways that historically underserved people are uniquely affected during the current pandemic and informed the recommended strategies to close gaps and encourage culturally responsive approaches in emergency practices.
- April 24 Governor Gary R. Herbert announces the creation of a Multicultural Advisory Committee to the State of Utah COVID-19 Response.
- April 24 The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and a variety of community partners host the first of many virtual town halls on healthy behaviors, safety, and resource awareness for the Latinx Community.

- May 1 The Multicultural Advisory
 Committee holds its first meeting to
 determine action items, strategies, and
 communications channels to mitigate
 COVID-19 impacts on
 underrepresented communities in Utah.
 Strategy workgroups are also formed
 for targeted needs which were
 identified from community stakeholders
 in the "Local Needs Among Utah's
 Multicultural Communities During
 COVID-19" report. Committee
 meetings are determined to be held on
 a weekly basis.
- May 7 The Utah Martin Luther King Jr. Human Rights Commission, Utah
 Division of Multicultural Affairs, and the Multicultural Advisory Committee
 hosts the first of many virtual town halls
 focused on reducing COVID-19 risk,
 healthy behaviors, mental wellness,
 safety, and resource awareness for the
 Black Community in Utah.
- May 21 The Utah Division of Indian Affairs and the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs host the first of many virtual town halls focused on reducing COVID-19 risk, healthy behaviors, mental wellness, safety, and resource awareness for the Native American Community in Utah.

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2020 TIMELINE

JUNE JULY AUGUST One of the second s

- June The Multicultural Advisory Committee's strategy workgroups develop short term and long term goals to guide initiatives and they continue to meet with state, local, and nongovernmental leaders and organizations to identify collaboration points.
- June 18 The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, through the leadership of the Multicultural Advisory Committee, launches the Racial Equity & Inclusion Fund, which will provide grants to community-based organizations (CBOs) to bolster emergency support and financial assistance to disproportionately impacted communities. The fund will also focus on lasting impact to address systemic disparities.
- June 18 The Utah State Legislature appropriates \$1 million in CARES Act funding (HB5010) in a special session to support the COVID-19 Racial Equity & Inclusion Fund.

- July 31 The Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition and the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs host a virtual town hall on healthy behaviors, safety, and resource awareness for the Pacific Islander Community in Utah.
- July 31 The Multicultural Advisory
 Committee, through the Utah Division of
 Multicultural Affairs and the Utah
 Department of Heritage Arts, opens the
 COVID-19 Racial Equity and Inclusion
 Grant Program. The \$1 million grant
 program becomes available to
 organizations that serve the basic needs of
 multicultural communities, which have
 been disproportionately impacted by the
 pandemic.
- July 15- Student fellows were hired to increase capacity in crisis response with the assistance and partnership of Hope Corp at the University of Utah. MCA fellows would dedicate time to advance COVID-19 specific projects that increase engagement with diverse populations.

- August 26 The Communications
 Workgroup of the Multicultural
 Advisory Committee coordinates a
 statewide Spanish Press Briefing with
 the Governor's Office to inform Latinx
 and Spanish individuals amidst
 disproportionately high case counts
 from these particular communities.
- August 20 The Utah Legislature holds another special session to allocate additional funding within the state budget to further address the impacts of COVID-19.
- August 20 Thanks to an additional \$3 million from the Legislative Special Session, the COVID-19 Racial Equity & Inclusion Grants deadline is extended to September 8th.
- August The Multicultural Advisory
 Committee partnered with the Leavitt
 Partners, a Utah based Health Policy
 Research group, to draft a white paper
 focusing on the exacerbated health
 inequities during COVID-19.

"We need programs and practices that fit the communities where racially and ethnically diverse groups live, learn, work, play, and build community."

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2020 TIMELINE

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER







- September 8 The COVID-19 Racial Equity and Inclusion Grant Program closes with 142 applications received from a variety of nonprofits, state and local entities, and frontline providers.
- September 14 A Spanish-speaking public information officer is hired through the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs with support from the Utah Department of Public Safety to address communications and language access barriers in statewide COVID-19 prevention messaging.
- September IKEA US Community
 Foundation, provided a generous
 donation of \$1 million to the Racial
 Equity and Inclusion Fund to have a
 positive impact on the state to
 address local needs.

- October 6 The Multicultural Advisory
 Committee in collaboration with Lt.
 Governor Spencer Cox participated in
 Southern Utah University's Rural Summit to
 bring awareness to lessons learned during
 the pandemic, national and local civil
 unrest, and natural disasters and how they
 uniquely impacted racially and ethnically
 diverse communities.
- October 9 Housing and Social Services research staff worked with data from the Utah State Courts and the U.S. Census and found that disparities in evictions exist with a significant number of evictions (over 80%) occurring in zip codes that are predominately of color.
- October 23 The Multicultural Advisory Committee helped launch a youth video contest as part of the #Ronalert Campaign to promote social media messages for 14-25 year olds on healthy behaviors.

- November 10 The "Resilient Truths" blog series was launched to capture community voices that shed light on the journey of COVID-19 for diverse groups.
- November The Multicultural Advisory Committee convened a racially, ethnically and geographically diverse Racial Equity & Inclusion Grant Review Panel. The program awarded 126 organizations with up to \$50,000 to provide emergency assistance to communities disproportionately affected by the pandemic.
- November The Multicultural Advisory Committee, in partnership with Salt Lake County, Voices for Utah Children, and Comunidades Unidas launched the "Left Behind Worker" Initiative to provide support for families who did not qualify for a stimulus check.

BEYOND

The Multicultural Advisory Committee, in tandem with the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, will work towards an equitable crisis response and recovery alongside community partners into 2021.

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OUR

PURPOSE

The purpose of the Multicultural Advisory Committee is to work in collaboration with existing frameworks to amplify efforts and alleviate the growing disparities faced by systematically marginalized and underrepresented communities. The Committee aims to work towards long- and short-term goals that will begin to address the existing challenges the pandemic has compounded through both practical efforts and policy initiatives. Immediate and urgent needs will be addressed through strategy workgroups.





VISION STATEMENT

The Multicultural Advisory Committee seeks to:

- ELEVATE best practices inspired by individual and collective achievements.
- COORDINATE an infrastructure for individuals and groups to work together statewide.
- CONNECT state and private resources to the community.
- ACCELERATE existing resources to programs for greatest impact.



RESPONDING TO A CRISIS



THE NEED & THE GAPS

On March 6, 2020, Governor Gary R. Herbert issued an executive order declaring a state of emergency in response to the evolving outbreak of novel coronavirus (COVID-19) (Exec. Order No. 2020-1, 2020). Many leaders within multicultural communities expected for this crisis to impact underrepresented and underserved communities especially hard given deeply rooted socioeconomic inequities that would only be aggravated.

The Hispanic and Latinx community experienced a surge of cases, where in some weeks they accounted for over 40% of the state's cases, despite their 14.2% share of the total population (State of Utah COVID-19 Response, 2020). The Pacific Islander community continues to have dangerously high hospitalization rates and disproportionate case counts as well. Native American communities, especially in the southern parts of the state along the Navajo Nation, have also been significantly impacted by the virus, even ranking behind only New York and New Jersey for per-capita confirmed cases early in this crisis (State of Utah COVID-19 Response, 2020).

Alongside communities of color, it quickly manifested that the groups most affected by COVID-19 and its devastating economic implications include low-wage workers, immigrants, refugees, non-English speakers,

people who are housing insecure or experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, people who are food insecure, and people who are incarcerated. This was determined through findings from a report released by the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, entitled "Local Needs Among Utah's Multicultural Communities". To address disproportionate case counts and identify ways to center equity in crisis-response, Governor Herbert convened a Multicultural Advisory Committee, a main recommendation from the said report.

During the past six months the Committee has met every week as a large group and they have collaborated towards long and short-term goals that address the pre-existing challenges the pandemic has compounded for our most vulnerable communities. Without fail, these members have also met multiple times a week within strategy workgroups to discuss ways to increase awareness, access, and services to the populations hardest hit by the pandemic.

"To address disproportionate case counts and identify ways to center equity in crisis-response, Governor Herbert convened a Multicultural Advisory Committee."

This group of dedicated volunteers have considered, discussed, explored and envisioned solutions that not only address the gaps that currently exist but that have the potential to change culture so that our historically underserved communities are equitably considered in relief and recovery efforts beyond the pandemic.

The members appointed to serve are a racially and ethnically diverse cross section of community advocates, nonprofits, state agencies, faith-based organizations, healthcare partners, and business leaders.

The purpose of the Multicultural Advisory Committee is to work in collaboration with existing frameworks to amplify efforts and alleviate the growing disparities faced by systematically marginalized and underrepresented communities. The advisory committee aims to work towards long and short-term goals that will begin to address the existing challenges the pandemic has compounded through both practical efforts and policy initiatives. Immediate and urgent needs will be addressed through strategy workgroups.

SECTIONS 1.2 THE RESPONSE

Upon the formation of the Multicultural Advisory Committee, the general public started to become more aware of the disproportionate impacts of COVID-19 on underrepresented communities, particularly communities of color. Awareness was the first step, and the Committee hit the ground running to address aggravated socioeconomic and health disparities through actionable items and partnerships.

Strategy workgroups were formed for targeted needs and meetings were determined to be held on a weekly basis. The larger committee meeting and workgroup sessions have focused on finding sustainable connections and ways to fill immediate gaps. Stakeholders and leaders from across the state and sectors have been brought together for a common purpose: to respond to this crisis with equity at the center. The Committee has established meaningful partnerships with state agencies, public and private partners, and community based organizations, in order to increase awareness of the need for equitable distribution of resources, access to personal protective equipment, and the creation of language accessible information through translation, interpretation, and literacy skills considerations. For example, the communications strategy workgroup has

collaborated with state leaders in the coordination of disseminating culturally relevant information for mass access and has brought attention to the efforts of community advocates already engaged in critical grassroots initiatives. This structure and motivation is how the Committee envisions each state leadership meeting should be held because with diverse and representative participation comes intentional connection and sustainable solutions. More has been achieved through key partnerships and feedback loops in the areas of communications, digital equity, economic sustainability, food security, housing & social services, health equity, and language access. The following sections of this report will provide an overview of these ongoing initiatives.

"A MASK FOR EVERY UTAHN" PARTNERSHIP

In September 2020, Governor Gary R. Herbert announced 'A Mask for Every Utahn,' a public-private partnership to provide free face masks to all. Masks, along with social distancing, have played an important role as people report to work and engage in essential activities. The Multicultural Advisory Committee explored the equitable distribution tactics of this program which led to a partnership with the

Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development to ensure multicultural communities have access to masks and personal protective equipment. Nonprofits and community-based organizations (CBOs) were invited to request masks to distribute to their constituents considering their already established relationship with communities. Delivery and shipments were coordinated by the staff at the Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development and targeted outreach was done through social media, email marketing, and personal follow-up. As a result of these efforts, over 100,000 masks were distributed throughout the course of the partnership project to organizations across the state.

COVID-19 RACIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION GRANT

Another major response was the formation of the COVID-19 Racial Equity & Inclusion Grant through the partnership of the Multicultural Advisory Committee, the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and the Utah Department of Heritage Arts. This program provided grants to community-based organizations (CBOs) to increase capacity for emergency support and financial assistance to disproportionately impacted communities, with a focus on lasting impact to alter systemic disparities. Grants of up to \$50,000 were provided to organizations in Utah working in emergency basic needs assistance to multicultural communities, including but not limited to utilities, rent, transportation, food assistance, and case management.

Attention was given to ensure wide geographic distribution of grant funding, focusing on communities that have been hardest hit by the pandemic.

The program awarded 126 grants totaling close to \$5 million for non-profit and community-based organizations across the state of Utah, and have increased capacity for these groups to serve their communities during COVID-19. This grant has created a framework to center racial equity in resource distribution and to help redress and acknowledge the historical disadvantage that people of color, and organizations led by people of color, have been subject to.

The broader economic crisis surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic has left individuals and families without resources for food, housing, utilities, and other essentials. Many workers and families in underrepresented communities have been left out of federal stimulus support. Stakeholders of this initiative believe addressing racial disparities is an essential step towards building a more fair and just community, especially as we confront and overcome the impacts of the pandemic.

LEAVITT PARTNERS HEALTH INEQUITIES REPORT

Researching the underlying causes of inequities is also an aim that the Multicultural Advisory Committee considers vital. In response, the Committee partnered with the Leavitt Partners, a Utah based health policy research group, to draft a white paper focusing on the health inequities and disparities that were exacerbated during COVID-19, but that pre-existed due to historical systemic barriers.

The following is an excerpt from the paper that explains the purpose of the research and how it will be used to inform equity-based policy:

"Since the earliest stages in the COVID-19 pandemic, Utah recognized that there were significant disparities in case, hospitalization, and mortality rates between the majority white populations and ethnically diverse populations in Utah. These disparities were mirrored across the country and follow longstanding patterns of health disparities that pre-date the current pandemic. These populations play a pivotal role in Utah's economic prosperity, providing a workforce for important industries in the state. At the same time, racially and ethnically diverse communities have been hardest hit by unemployment, healthcare insecurity, and other adverse impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The state took early actions to address the growing disproportionate impact on communities of color by forming a Multicultural Advisory Committee, deploying Community Health Workers (CHWs) that have a long tradition of serving as a health advocate for historically underserved communities, and tracking data broken out by race to identify trends.

The state also commissioned Leavitt
Partners to analyze the national landscape of health disparities during COVID-19 and interventions being deployed to address these disparities. The end goal of this work is to identify interventions to be implemented in Utah to address the inequities so that stakeholders in Utah—lawmakers, healthcare leaders, community-based organizations (CBOs), public health experts, and other partners—can work together in the short- and long-term."

Addressing Health Disparities Among Racially & Culturally Diverse Populations in Utah During COVID-19, Leavitt Partners Report

Leaders of the Multicultural Advisory
Committee, Nubia Peña, Ze Min Xiao,
and Byron Russell, issued a joint
statement stating, "We hope this report
will elevate the invaluable perspectives of
community health workers and frontline
stakeholders to help inform decision
makers on immediate and long-term
equity-oriented interventions. We
believe that this can address and avoid
future socio, cultural, economic, and
health implications magnified in the
pandemic."

Read the full report at:

leavittpartners.com/whitepaper/addressi
ng-health-disparities-among-raciallyculturally-diverse-populations-in-utahduring-covid-19/



MOBILIZING FOR ACTION



SECTION 2.1.1:

COMMUNICATIONS

Equity in communications means that timely access to accurate information for marginalized communities is prioritized, and that messaging strategies come from trusted sources guided by culturally-relevant perspectives.

GOALS

The communications efforts of the Multicultural Advisory Committee will address systemic barriers to information for underrepresented groups in the state of Utah through community mobilization and identifying preferred modes of information retrieval. The pandemic has aggravated many deep-seated disparities and misinformation and delay has only created more barriers. The overarching goals are to ensure marginalized communities are better informed to respond to, navigate, and recover from current and future crises.

INITIATIVES

Specific efforts related to communications have included creating short public service announcements and media campaigns that resonate with disproportionately affected communities to relay information through trusted sources, collaborate to ensure that state messaging is providing language-accessible information, work with community based organizations in multiple sectors to share information and implement strategies to address systemic barriers, and organize media outreach with subject matter experts through culturally relevant channels. This has resulted in the hiring of a Spanish-speaking public information officer to serve the state of Utah by coordinating media relations such as press conferences and interviews. Though the expertise is in Spanishspeaking populations, the officer is likewise addressing multicultural needs.

THE PANDEMIC HAS AGGRAVATED MANY DEEP-SEATED DISPARITIES, AND MISINFORMATION AND DELAY HAS ONLY CREATED MORE BARRIERS. WHEN INFORMATION IS PRESENTED TO COMMUNITIES IN AN INCLUSIVE AND CULTURALLY-RESPONSIVE MANNER, THEY ARE BETTER EQUIPPED TO RESPOND TO, NAVIGATE, AND RECOVER FROM A CRISIS.

SECTION 2.1.2: DIGITAL EQUITY

Digital equity is defined as a condition in which all individuals and communities have the information technology capacity needed for full participation in our society, democracy and economy (National Digital Inclusion Alliance, n.d.).

GOALS

The Multicultural Advisory Committee's digital equity goals focus on expanding accessibility to affordable broadband services and WiFi, providing affordable and language accessible programs for digital literacy, and provide socially distant inperson consultations on digital literacy and accessibility tools in various languages.

INITIATIVES

The Multicultural Advisory Committee is currently working on increasing broadband coverage in rural areas and building awareness of local projects such as Rose Park Connect and Millcreek Promise. In addition, there are plans to expand digital literacy through partnering with the Utah State Library Division and Cultural Community Stakeholders to utilize pre-existing programs. Lastly, developing a statewide refurbishment program to provide free or low-cost devices through refurbishing state hardware is an ongoing initiative that has the potential to further bridge the digital divide. There are plans to partner with local technology companies and foundations to help support this mission of increasing access to hardware.

DIGITAL EQUITY IS MORE THAN ACCESS.

IT IS NECESSARY FOR CIVIC AND CULTURAL PARTICIPATION,
EMPLOYMENT, LIFELONG LEARNING, AND ACCESS TO
ESSENTIAL SERVICES.

SECTION 2.1.3: ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

Economic sustainability, in the local context, captures an integrated approach to address economic impacts on underrepresented communities through business development, workforce security, and financial literacy.

GOALS

The efforts of the Committee in economic sustainability aim to help diverse businesses recover, reinvigorate, and assess their models to respond to COVID-19 safely for both patrons and employees. This will be done through the lens of economic justice by considering the systemic barriers to building wealth and assets for disenfranchised communities. This guiding goal is to improve the opportunity equation for all to lead fulfilling and sustainable lives free from major concerns about meeting basic needs.

INITIATIVES

Specific ways that these goals have been actualized have been through key partnerships in providing personal protective equipment to diverse businesses, promoting business grants and safety messaging in collaboration with local and state entities, and elevating diverse businesses and leaders through a social media campaign to promote patronage and awareness. Diverse and underrepresented communities have been disproportionately impacted economically by the virus on a variety of fronts, but the same communities have been pillars in industries that have been labeled as "essential." This concept will guide future efforts to increase capacity for diverse workforce, businesses owners, and partners to address economic disparities through sustainable solutions.

THE ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF COVID-19 HAVE BEEN HEAVILY BORN BY SMALL BUSINESSES, COMMUNITIES OF COLOR, AND DIVERSE GROUPS. THIS REQUIRES AN ECONOMIC JUSTICE LENS THAT ACKNOWLEDGES THE INTERSECTIONS OF WEALTH, AND PHYSICAL AND SOCIOEMOTIONAL HEALTH.

SECTION 2.1.4: FOOD SECURITY

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) defines food insecurity as a lack of consistent access to enough food for an active, healthy life and refers to a lack of available financial resources for food at the household level.

GOALS

Extensive research reveals food insecurity is a complex problem that does not exist in isolation. This has urged the Committee to focus on collaborating with partners to increase food distribution centers across the state and build awareness of food assistance programs such as SNAP and Pandemic EBT. Longer term goals include helping formalize a standardized food pantry application form across Utah in multiple languages, forecasting food insecurity through data gathering, and systematically considering equity in food distribution resiliency.

INITIATIVES

Furthering of these goals has taken the form of collaboration with partners to increase flexibility so that as many people as possible can sign up for, and easily remain on, SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program), promote culturally-relevant food options that respect religious dietary restrictions and provide items to sustain traditional diets, and create an interactive state map of food pantries and banks with the support of the Utah Division of State History. Community partners dedicated to food security have seen a heightened demand for assistance. For example, the Utah Food Bank has seen a 300% increase in the need for food for hungry Utahns since the pandemic began (Gresseth, 2020). Future efforts will also focus on creating expansive partnerships for food services to be coupled with social and housing services so that multiple needs are met.

SEVERE FOOD INSECURITY HAS BECOME MORE PREVALENT ACROSS THE STATE AND COUNTRY DUE TO COVID-19, BUT IT IS NOT IN ISOLATION. AS UNEMPLOYMENT HITS, CASES RISE, AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE DWINDLES, THE CAPACITY FOR PEOPLE TO BE ABLE TO FEED THEIR FAMILIES IS LIMITED.

SECTION 2.1.6:

HEALTH EQUITY

Health equity implies that everyone should have a fair opportunity to attain their full health potential and that no one should be disadvantaged from achieving this (World Health Organization, n.d.).

GOALS

The goals surrounding health equity include advocating and supporting the COVID Communities Partnership Project (CCP) implemented by the Utah Department of Health - Office of Health Disparities, and proposing future legislative initiatives to help mitigate the spread and effects of COVID-19 on underserved and underrepresented communities. These efforts are also centered on the social determinants of health which are aspects of the environment in which people are born, grow up, live, work, and age, as well as the systems put in place to address illness.

INITIATIVES

The efforts of the Committee in health equity will center on documenting and highlighting COVID-19 inequities faced by racially and ethnically diverse communities and populations in Utah. In partnership with the Leavitt Partners, the Multicultural Advisory Committee will provide recommendations to the Utah Department of Health for feasible short- and long-term interventions for addressing racism and racial health inequities in Utah in health care. This will also serve to bring awareness to legislators and policy makers about the inequities racially and ethnically diverse communities experience in Utah to inspire action at the highest level of Utah government.

THE PANDEMIC HAS AGGRAVATED DEEPLY ROOTED HEALTH INEQUITIES THAT HAVE MADE COMMUNITIES OF COLOR MORE VULNERABLE TO COVID-19 INFECTION. TO COMBAT THESE BARRIERS, WE NEED PROGRAMS AND PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE WELLNESS, ASSETS, AND EDUCATION SURROUNDING HEALTH WITHIN THESE GROUPS.

SECTION 2.1.5: HOUSING & SOCIAL SERVICES

Housing & social services address the needs of communities in relationship to housing, mental health, and other related social services.

GOALS

The Multicultural Advisory Committee seeks to understand how COVID-19 is adversely affecting housing and social services for Utah's diverse communities and then to collaborate and find solutions to address unmet needs while building on existing community assets and resources. This area of services addresses intersecting and the most basic needs for communities, so it is the hope that the safety net be expanded and resources be distributed equitably to those who have historically lacked or been denied access.

INITIATIVES

Initiatives within this realm include gathering data and measuring the number and impact of evictions on Utah's multicultural communities, influencing and shifting COVID-19 emergency mental health/substance use funding streams to ensure adequate attention to multicultural communities, and identifying funding resources that will bridge the existing gap for undocumented people in the state. Access to social services are essential for a high quality life. The COVID-19 pandemic is adversely affecting economic, health, and other resource access for communities throughout the state and as such, the Committee plans to ensure greater awareness and access to said intersectional impacts. These initiatives will achieve access by finding and addressing gaps in services and then using connections and resources to bridge gaps with access to funding, information, and/or additional resources.

ACCESS TO HOUSING AND SOCIAL SERVICES
ARE ESSENTIAL FOR A HIGH QUALITY LIFE AND
OFTENTIMES IT IS THESE BASIC NEEDS THAT ARE DISRUPTED
THE MOST DURING A CRISIS.

SECTION 2.1.7: LANGUAGE ACCESS

Language access can be defined as strategic and systemic management of multilingual communication within different contexts and across various scales of delivery.

GOALS

The language access goals of the committee include advocating for plain-language messaging to streamline translation, ensure those with limited English Proficiency have access to services, programs and activities, and to work with a variety of partners to translate and update key documents for encouraging healthy behaviors during COVID-19. Responding to emergencies can be difficult and stressful for everyone, but it can cause even more strain for Limited English Proficient (LEP) populations. State leaders can further ensure language accessibility by operationalizing it in policy as well as practice.

INITIATIVES

Current initiatives include the distribution of a Communication Survey to gauge how public information officers across the state are addressing gaps, in turn assess how language access can be better prioritized. Agency-wide partnerships have been formed with the Utah Department of Health as well to determine priority documents to be translated and promote more timely release of materials in multiple languages. There is also ongoing work to create a language access plan, in collaboration with communication and marketing models, to support information delivery.

MORE THAN 120 LANGUAGES ARE SPOKEN IN UTAH AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE MEASURES HAVE A GREAT RESPONSIBILITY TO PROVIDE LANGUAGE ACCESS SERVICES TO ALL PEOPLE (WHITEHURST, 2015).

OUR IMPACT BY THE NUMBERS

Numbers speak volumes. The figures below show signature impacts brought on by the Multicultural Advisory Committee and provide a snapshot of engagement across multiple efforts.

100,000 +

Over 100,000 masks were distributed to community organizations as a result of the partnership with the Governor's Office of Economic Development and the Multicultural Advisory Committee.



CLOSE TO 5 MILLION

\$4,826,200 dollars were granted out to 126 organizations as part of the COVID-19 Racial Equity & Inclusion Grant.





30,000+

50+

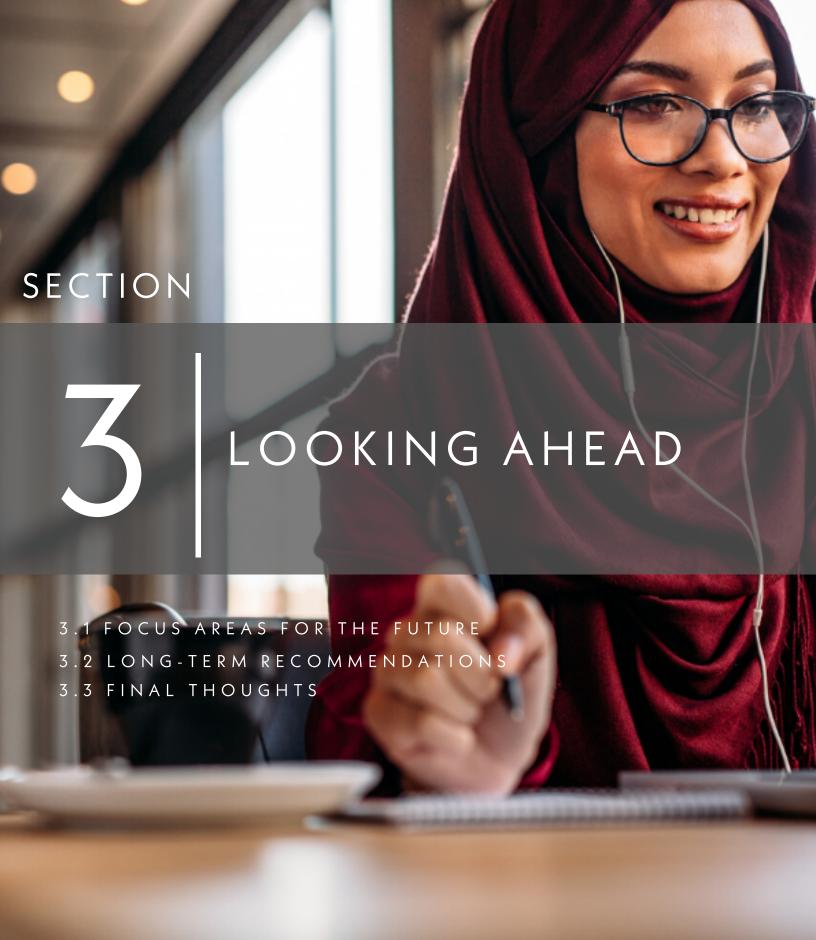
PARTNERSHIPS

Virtual town halls were hosted to provide key information and in total they reached over 30,000 viewers. Additionally, over 50 community partnerships were formed to help triage information and resources.



2,000+ HRS

Multicultural Advisory Committee members and partners dedicated an estimated 2,000 hours to address equity gaps in Utah's COVID-19 response.



SECTION 3.1:

FOCUS AREAS FOR THE FUTURE

The efforts of the Multicultural Advisory
Committee demonstrate the value of
transectoral solidarity and equitable capacitybuilding for state responses and leadership
environments. When we plan for, develop, and
collaborate for emergency infrastructure to
service the most historically and systematically
marginalized and disenfranchised among us, we
are ensuring the safety, wellbeing and
sustainability of all communities.

The Multicultural Commission of Utah, under the direction of the Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs, has the capacity to prioritize policy engagement, as dictated by state code (Utah Code 9-21-302). However, additional investments on behalf of the state are needed to ensure long term capacity to identify and address gaps in existing services and consider culturally responsive strategies that are truly meaningful and acknowledge diverse communities.

It is recommended that similar policy should be incorporated to systemize the work of the Multicultural Advisory Committee and embed the practice of equity into emergency response so that future crises avoid aggravating the same socioeconomic and health inequities that were compounded and magnified due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The following section will detail long-term recommendations specific to strategy topics the Committee has embarked upon so that change is intersectional and focuses on operationalizing successful frameworks established throughout the last six-months.

KEY TERM

Transectoral Solidarity: The concept of collaboration and unity across multiple and diverse sectors of industry, research, and expertise, to accomplish a common goal.



COMMUNICATIONS

Communications Triage System

• The COVID-19 communication response efforts should be operationalized permanently as a process for diverse communities to receive critical information from state government entities that address disparities, providing equity and inclusion for all. This includes creating and implementing a communications triage system centered on disseminating information through trusted community groups and leaders for state agencies to utilize target communities' preferred information delivery methods.

Coordinated Equitable Crisis Communications & Language Access Plan

• To establish communications best practices for hard-to-reach communities, there should be a formal communications plan (in tandem with a language access plan) for crisis agencies and responders to use in the face of crisis and beyond. It is imperative that state information be provided in multiple languages, at an accessible literacy level, and disseminated in a timely manner so that all communities are equipped to respond to critical situations.

Incorporation of Multicultural Public Information Officer

• The inclusion of a qualified public information officer in all core crisis response teams will greatly improve communication to underserved communities. It is proposed that a public information officer that targets multicultural communities be incorporated into the state's framework of communications in the context of a crisis and beyond. This would help mitigate a large trust gap among groups by having a role dedicated to bridging media entities, state and subject-matter experts, and communities at large. This sends an unmistakable message of inclusion and advocacy.

DIGITAL EQUITY

Digital Equity Strategic Plan

 To promote digital access and equity, it is proposed that the state establish a digital equity strategic plan to increase access for digital devices, internet connectivity and digital literacy trainings. This plan would address device access and technical support, information connectivity, and skills training. These principles would require measurable benchmarks, review investments, and identification of statewide partnership opportunities.

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Refurbished State-Owned Surplus Device Program

• Device ownership has been an asset largely relied on for timely information during this pandemic era. Refurbishing state-owned surplus computers to provide the public with free or low-cost devices would increase and more widely distribute the benefits of digital access in an affordable and sustainable manner.

ECONOMIC SUSTAINABILITY

State Diversity Supplier Program

• Inclusive procurement allows for BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) business owners to economically thrive while enriching diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging initiatives at both private sectors and state agencies. The lack of a state diversity supplier program is preventing BIPOC communities access to opportunities within the state of Utah. This affects BIPOC small business owners, because it creates missed opportunities to allow an opening in tightlyknit networks and it decreases the economic diversity. An example of a local corporation who is implementing a diversity supplier program is Zions Bancorporation which creates "an environment that levels the playing field so all businesses can successfully compete for Zions Bancorporation procurement opportunities." (Zions Bank, n.d.) The National Minority Supplier Diversity Council reports that certified diverse businesses generate \$400 billion in economic output that leads to the creation or preservation of 2.2 million jobs and \$49 billion in annual revenue for local, state, and federal tax authorities.

Equitable Small Business Loan Programs & Accountability for Private Businesses

• While the 2020 pandemic has disproportionately impacted BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, People of Color) small business owners, COVID-19 relief programs, like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) Loans, excluded many within communities of color. The PPP initially relied on traditional banks to deliver loans, which favored existing customers at large banks and disfavored microbusinesses (businesses with fewer than 10 employees), non-employer businesses, and Black- and Latino- or Hispanic-owned businesses (which all tend to be unbanked or underbanked) The lack of an intentional streamlined process of statewide loan programs creates fewer to no opportunities for BIPOC businesses and organizations to access these critical programs. It interferes with the survival of BIPOC businesses during unforeseen circumstances such as the COVID-19 pandemic or emergency situations. This calls for evening the playing field by offering racially inclusive programs that hold private businesses accountable, eliminate bias-based decisions, and include culturally competent outreach efforts. BIPOC businesses and economic organizations need increased access to state loan programs to help their businesses thrive in Utah's economy.

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FOOD SECURITY

Food Access Communications Channel & Feedback Loop

• To create synergy across entities, it is imperative to connect all of the food access work that is happening within the state. This requires identification of partners and establishing a standard for communication and reporting between the groups so that each can support each other's work and avoid duplication. In this, a feedback loop can be created to also target gaps in food access across the state and in a manner that provides culturally-inclusive food options.

Dedicated Efforts to Increase Culturally-Inclusive & Healthy Food Options

Creating a group dedicated to increasing access to culturally and dietary appropriate food would help food access groups transition from vision to action and educate communities on how to eat healthy, but also maintain cultural cuisines. This is an operational shift that should be centered in land use policies as well so that the prevalence of food deserts is diminished and communities can reclaim the ability to navigate meal planning through healthy food options at affordable prices and that satisfy their cultural context.

HEALTH EQUITY

Community Advisory Board Requirement for all State Agencies

 State agencies should include "Community Advisory Boards" (CABs) to provide feedback and recommendations to the respective agency as well as to drive policy changes if situations require it. • The state of public health would greatly benefit from a body like this so that gaps in social, emotional, and physical health can be identified at the community level in addition to research methods. Embedded in this process would be a standard for representative diversity in those boards of racial-ethnic background, geographic location, and expertise. The advisory boards decisions would need to be relevant to the way agencies operate and provide services. Providing training to community members on how to serve on those boards and in the context of equity work would be vital. If funds allow, it is also recommended that CAB members be compensated for their time. In terms of reporting, there needs to be an accountability loop through the form of annual reports to the Governor's Office on accomplishments, challenges, opportunities, and goals for the coming year. The Utah Division of Multicultural Affairs and its respective commissions can serve as integral partners in advancing equity efforts and recommendations.

Establish Reliable and Frequent Community Feedback Opportunities

• For greater self-advocacy and transparency, there should be a process that will give the ability to any community member to provide feedback/recommendations to CAB members; in that way, CAB members can pass recommendations that represent the community and the community will feel empowered because their voices can be heard and make a difference in the way state agencies operate.

(Cont'd) In the context of COVID-19,
having community feedback would have
provided a clearer snapshot of day-to-day
experiences with messaging, guidelines,
and expectations that may not have been
as easily understood or executed among
multicultural communities.

Incorporate Long-Term Recommendations from Leavitt Partners' Report

 In collaboration with the Multicultural Advisory Committee, the Leavitt Partners released "Addressing Health Disparities Among Racially & Culturally Diverse Populations in Utah During COVID-19," a report on the spotlight COVID-19 has put on health disparities in Utah and nationally. The report analyzes the national landscape of health disparities, providing interventions that could be employed in the state. It is proposed that the findings be considered by the state legislature and health department to eliminate existing inequities by identifying solutions that are equitycentered and systems-based. Some shortterm interventions include community partnership in testing events, implementing state-level hazard pay, ensuring accessible education on COVID-19, allocating important resources, and implementing accountability measures related to health disparities.

HOUSING & SOCIAL SERVICES

Rental Assistance Expansion

 More widespread, accessible, and relevant rental assistance is required to help our multicultural communities. Investment in communities and public housing is specifically important. Rental assistance should utilize existing data on racial-ethnic disparities to inform how and where rental assistance is both available and offered.

Addressing Racial Inequities in Evictions & Cultural Responsiveness

• Utah must not shy away from culturally responsive approaches to issues of evictions. This means that if multicultural communities are being disproportionately impacted by evictions in the state, there must be concerted efforts to thwart this disproportionality through dedicated funding streams and resources within those communities. This could include (re)investment in housing case management supports, eviction mediation supports, and greater accessibility to legal aid that is both linguistically and culturally responsive.

LANGUAGE ACCESS

Systemic Plain Language Review Process

• The lack of a state systemic plain language review process during emergency situations creates significant barriers in disseminating critical information to culturally and linguistically diverse populations in Utah. This also delays the process of getting public information translated into other languages in a timely manner. The Utah Department of Health already implements a plain language review process when distributing critical documents to the public, but establishing a plain language review process within a statewide system would make the translation of documents into other languages quicker and more streamlined.

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State Policy Reform of English-Language Only Law (Utah Code 63G-1-201)

Removing Utah law/code 3G-1-201, which
declares English as the official language of
Utah, would open opportunities for
increased communication among all
communities, especially those from
culturally and linguistically diverse
communities. Removing this law would
streamline the communication process in
getting critical information to
communities who speak languages other
than English.

-END OF SECTION-

LOOKING AHEAD

FINAL THOUGHTS

The efforts of the Multicultural Advisory

Committee are ongoing and driven by community leaders and partnerships that are deeply rooted in equity, justice, and inclusion. The Committee honors the work of frontline advocates and health workers, without which the feedback loops established with community members would not be possible.

Moving forward, we exhort a call to action for all Utahns to be aware of the impacts of COVID-19 on underrepresented communities and that racial equity and justice be institutionalized in crisis response so that aggravation of disparities can be avoided and recovery can be more streamlined.

Through continued commitment, action and research, it is our hope that public officials, state agencies, and community partners can collectively work to develop outreach and response strategies that serve all Utahns. Together, we can collaborate to take necessary steps that will lessen this pandemic's impact on the most systematically marginalized to ensure we advance and recover as a unified state.



SECTION

APPENDIX

- 4.1 MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE PARTNERS
- 4.2 REFERENCES

MULTICULTURAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE PARTNERS

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

- Alliance Community Health
- Comunidades Unidas
- Christian Center Park City
- Domo
- Encircle LGBTQ Family & Youth Center
- Institute for Diversity & Health Equity
- Multicultural Counseling Services
- NAACP Ogden Branch
- NAACP Salt Lake Branch
- Neighborhood House
- Ogden City
- Project Success Coalition
- Salt Lake City Mayor's Office
- Salt Lake County Mayor's Office for New Americans
- Salt Lake City Public Library
- Salt Lake Education Foundation
- Same Day Translations, LLC
- Suazo Business Center
- Utah Black Chamber

- Utah Black Roundtable
- Utah Department of Health
- Utah Department of Transportation
- Utah Department of Workforce Services
- Utah Film Center
- Utah Food Bank
- Utah Governor's Office of Economic Development
- Utah League of Cities & Towns
- Utah Pacific Islander Health Coalition
- Utah Pride Center
- Utah State Library
- Utah State University
- Utah Transit Authority
- Utahns Against Hunger
- Voices for Utah Children
- Wasatch Front Regional Council
- Westminster College
- World Trade Center Utah

RACIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION GRANT RECIPIENTS

- Adopt-A-Native-Elder Program
- Al-Huda Islamic Center
- Alliance Community Services, Alianza Comunitaria
- American Indian Services
- Asian Association of Utah
- Bhutanese Community in Utah
- Box Elder Community Pantry
- Box Elder Family Support Center
- Boys & Girls Club of Greater Salt Lake
- Building Up Youth
- Cache Community Food Pantry
- Cache Refugee & Immigrant Connection
- Casa Castillo Foundation Inc
- Calvary Baptist Church

- Catholic Community SVCS Utah
- Centro De La Familia De Utah
- Cherish Families
- Child and Family Empowerment Foundation
- Children's Service Society of Utah
- Utah Chinese Association
- Choice Humanitarian
- Christ for the Nations Church
- Christian Center of Park City
- Columbus Community Center"
- Community Nursing Services
- Comunidad Materna en Utah
- CONNECT Summit County
- Creek Valley Health Clinic

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RACIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION GRANT RECIPIENTS (CONT'D)

- Davis Education Foundation
- Dixie State University
- Dual Immersion Academy
- Emerald Hills Institute
- English Language Center of Cache Valley
- English Skills Learning Center
- Eritreans United in Utah
- Family Support Center
- For The Kids Org
- Friends For Sight
- Full Circle Intertribal Center
- GK Folks Foundation
- Granite Education Foundation
- Greater Equatoria Region Association
- Guadalupe School
- Habitat For Humanity Of Weber And Davis Counties
- Hartland Community for Youth and Families
- Hearts Knit Together
- Holy Cross Ministries
- Indigenous International
- International Rescue Committee
- Jayhawks Program
- Jewish Family Service
- Journey of Hope, Inc.
- Kakwa Community USA
- Latino Behavioral Health Services
- Latinos in Action
- Liberians United in Utah
- Little Lambs Foundation for Kids
- Maliheh Free Clinic
- Create Reel Change
- Mesopotamia Community
- Midvale Community Clinic
- Curly Me on behalf of Millcreek Promise
- Moab Valley Multicultural Center
- Mountain Mediation Center
- NavajoStrong
- Neighborhood House Association
- Neighborworks Salt Lake
- Nuzzles and Co. Pet Rescue & Adoption

- Ogden Civic Action Network (CAN) -Weber State University
- One Refugee
- Open Doors
- Operation Warm Inc
- Pacific Island Knowledge 2 Action Resources
- Park City Community Foundation
- Park City Soccer Club
- Park City Tots
- People's Health Clinic
- Planned Parenthood Association of Utah
- Project Embrace
- Project Success Coalition
- Rape Recovery Center
- Ronald McDonald House Charities of the Intermountain Area
- Salt Lake American (Salt Lake American Muslim)
- Salt Lake City Mission
- Salt Lake Community College Office of Diversity & Multicultural Affairs
- Salt Lake Donated Dental Services
- Salt Lake Education Foundation
- Salty Cricket Composers Collective
- Salvation Army
- San Juan School District Regional Educational Foundation
- SLC Air Protectors
- Soap2hope
- Somali Bantus of Utah
- Somali Community Services of Utah
- Southern Utah Pacific Islander Coalition
- Spy Hop Productions
- St Anne's Center DBA Lantern House
- Stone of Hope Youth
- Suazo Business Center
- Switchpoint Community Resource Center
- The Best of Africa Cultural Group
- The Good Samaritan Foundation
- The Hope Alliance
- The Refuge Group

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RACIAL EQUITY & INCLUSION GRANT RECIPIENTS (CONT'D)

- Tender Mercies
- Umoja Generation
- United Micronesian Women
- United Way of Salt Lake
- United Way of Utah County (United Way of Central & Southern Utah)
- U of U University Neighborhood Partners
- University of Utah Dept of Pediatrics
- Urban Indian Center of Salt Lake
- Utah Foundation
- Utah Health and Human Rights Project
- Utah Health Policy Project
- Utah Muslim Civic League
- Utah Navajo Health System (UNHS)
- Utah Pacific Islander Civic Engagement Coalition
- Utah Valley Refugees
- Volunteers of America
- Wasatch Community Foundation (Wasatch Latino Coalition)
- Westminster College
- Women of the World
- Young Women's Christian Association YWCA
- Youth Futures
- Youthbuild Rescue Project

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THANK YOU FOR READING

HOW TO REFERENCE REPORT:

